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AARDVARK-VANAHEIM PRESENTS

CEREBUS

APPOINTMENTS

62
MAY

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A Note from the Publisher

This has been a very busy month for Aardvark-Vanaheim. Obviously, the biggest thing was our going out to California to attend Petuniacon. I must admit to feeling a certain amount of trepidation at the thought of attending a convention that focused so intently on A-V, (and Cerebus in particular). But, as I should have known, the convention was one of the easiest ones I've attended.

One real nice surprise came when we sat down to do an "Aardvark-Vanaheim Panel" with Gary Groth as "inquisitor". I was braced for the worst, but it was probably the most enjoyable panel I have sat on. Everyone there (Dave, me, Arn Saba, Bill Messner-Loebs, Joshua Quagmire, and Valentino) had a chance to say something about what they did, and defend their view of what comics are and should be. The only problem was that at the end of the 45 minutes, we were just getting started and the panel had to be discontinued. But I think that for the first time I felt the impact of publishing a line of comics. It was like I had been adopted by a second family. What a feeling to be surrounded by such supportive people! If I ever had any doubts about wanting to be a publisher, they were completely erased by the time the convention was over.

The day after the con was spent just roaming around San Francisco. It's a beautiful city, and I had forgotten how much I had enjoyed going there when I was a child (I grew up in the San Francisco Bay Area). I took a sailing trip on the Rendezvous and watched the sun set behind the Golden Gate bridge as we sailed past Alcatraz. The next day was spent going up to cat & Dean's place (Eclipse Enterprises) to work out the details of a joint press release to announce Ms. Tree's change of publishers from Eclipse to A-V. I was so happy that Mac and Terry wanted to come to A-V (flattered, actually, is the word) that I could barely keep the news to myself at Petuniacon. I hope that those A-V readers that haven't ever picked up a copy will give her a try in July, when we begin with issue #10.

It seems that in all this sharing of my big week in California with you, I have run out of space to discuss editorial viewpoint on the book you are reading. But then again, what can I say that isn't one superlative after another? If I didn't love the stories I publish, I wouldn't be publishing them; and if they weren't worth your money, you wouldn't be buying it. Would you? We people of discriminating taste must stick together.

Please note that an error was in the Cerebus Stuffed Toy ad in Cerebus #60. Should read "send to the address below", not "sent to the address below". Our apologies to Sheila Watson for the error.

Deni

CEREBUS

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APPOINTMENTS

SHE WAS CHILDLESS, YOU SEE. CIRIN SAW HER AS THE EMBODIMENT OF THE NEW MATRIARCHY AND FELT THAT THE BIRTH THAT WOULD MAKE ASTORIA A FULL CITIZEN HAD TO BE SPECIAL... HAD TO PLANNED. THE FATHER...THE HOUR OF CONCEPTION. EVERYTHING...
HER ADVISORS WARNED HER THAT ASTORIA WAS TOO INDEPENDANT... SHE ATTRIBUTED THIS TO JEALOUSY WHICH WAS ONLY PARTLY TRUE ...
IN FACT, BY HER SELECTION, CIRIN HAD PLACED ASTORIA IN A SITUATION THAT WAS UNTENABLE POLITICALLY. CIRIN TOLD HER EVERYTHING AND ENCOURAGED HER TO PARTICIPATE IN THE SETTING OF POLICY AND THE FRAMING OF THE COUNCIL DEBATES...
THE REST OF THE GOVERNMENT WAS A LOCKED ROOM FOR ASTORIA, HOWEVER. AND SHE WAS SOPHISTICATED ENOUGH TO SEE THE WRITING ON THE WALL, THOUGH SHE WAS STILL IN HER TEENS...

CIRIN COULD ORDER HER FOLLOWERS TO ACCEPT ASTORIA BUT LIKE ANY BUREAUCRACY, THEY COULD MAKE ASTORIA'S LIFE HELL, WHILE STILL PRESENTING A FACADE OF COOPERATION
SO, SEVERAL WEEKS BEFORE SHE WAS TO MARRY CIRIN'S ADOPTED SON, SIR GERRIK, IN A LAVISH STATE CEREMONY, ASTORIA MARRIED HIM IN PRIVATE, AND WAS, IN A MATTER OF A FEW DAYS -- IN A FAMILY WAY.
SOMETHING WHICH, ACCORDING TO CIRIN'S TIMETABLE, WAS NOT TO OCCUR FOR AT LEAST THREE MORE YEARS.
WHEN THE COUNCIL TRIED TO MAKE AN ISSUE OF IT, CIRIN EXCUSED IT AS A DIFFERENCE IN PHILOSOPHY -- SHE SUGGESTED THAT ASTORIA'S REBELLION WAS AGAINST THE RIGIDITY OF CEREMONY AND THE TRADITIONS OF FORM...
SHE MAINTAINED THAT ASTORIA WAS STEADFAST IN HER SUPPORT OF THE NEW MATRIARCHY...

HER SPEECH TO THE FULL COUNCIL IN DEFENSE OF HER PROTEGE WAS AN ARTFUL BLEND OF DIPLOMATIC CONCESSIONS AND URGENT PLEAS FOR SUPPORT. CIRIN'S HOLD ON THE GOVERNMENT WAS STILL NEAR TO ABSOLUTE AND THE PROTESTS FOUNDERED ...MOMENTARILY.
THEN, IN HER FINAL MONTH, ASTORIA VANISHED ...
THE OUTCRY RETURNED AND FOR SIX WEEKS, CIRIN STRAINED HER POWERS OF PERSUASION TO THE UTMOST TO MAINTAIN ORDER. FIRST, THERE WAS A PURGE OF THE PREVIOUSLY-TOLERATED OPPOSITION. THEN, A SMALL BORDER WAR WITH LOWER FELDA. SHE FINALLY RESTORED HER CONSENSUS, BUT FOR THE FIRST TIME HER BACKING WAS CONDITIONAL...

IT WAS A VERY COMPLICATED SITUATION. CIRIN WAS VERY MUCH IN CONTROL, BUT SHE HAD ALSO BEEN MADE AWARE THAT SOME MANNER OF *REASONABLE EXPLANATION* WOULD HAVE TO BE FORTHCOMING FROM ASTORIA IF SHE WAS TO CONTINUE WITH FULL SUPPORT FROM HER COUNCIL...
IN THE MIDST OF CIRIN'S JUGGLING THE EXECUTIVE, ASTORIA CAME BACK...
SHE JUST ARRIVED ONE MORNING IN THE RECEPTION AREA OF CIRIN'S OFFICES AND PATIENTLY WAITED FOR AN AUDIENCE. SHE WAS, OF COURSE, NO LONGER GREAT WITH CHILD...

CIRIN'S AIDES WERE DIVIDED ON WHETHER SHE SHOULD MEET WITH ASTORIA... IT WAS, AT LAST, DECIDED THAT AN *INFORMAL* COUNCIL INQUIRY BE HELD THE NEXT MORNING...
MOST OF THE MEMBERS CHOSEN WERE LONG-TIME ALLIES OF CIRIN'S --OR THOSE TRUSTED TO BE IMPARTIAL. CIRIN'S AIM WAS TO MAKE IT THE MILDEST REBUKE POSSIBLE UNDER THE CIRCUMSTANCES
WHICH, HAD ASTORIA CHOSEN TO CO-OPERATE...
IT MIGHT VERY WELL HAVE *BEEN*...

AS WITH ALL LEGAL PROCEEDINGS IN UPPER FELDA, ASTORIA WAS ASKED HER STATUS--MOTHER OR DAUGHTER--A FORMALITY...
ASTORIA TOLD THEM IT WAS NONE OF THEIR BUSINESS ...
THE INQUIRY WAS THROWN INTO A FRENZY. CIRIN TURNED SEVERAL SHADES OF CRIMSON
THE COUNCIL SPEAKER WAS THE FIRST TO SENSE THAT THEY WERE WALKING INTO A TRAP ...
SHE MOVED FOR A RECESS
CIRIN TOLD HER THERE WAS NO NEED FOR A RECESS--THEY HADN'T EVEN GOT TO THE DIFFICULT QUESTIONS YET...
SHE REPHRASED THE QUESTION... HAD ASTORIA GIVEN BIRTH AND WAS THE BABY ALIVE?

ASTORIA PLAYED HER TRUMP CARD. SHE SAID SHE PERSONALLY BELIEVED THAT THE LAWS OF THE STATE DID NOT APPLY TO THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN A MOTHER AND HER CHILD. SHE WOULD NEITHER *CONFIRM* NOR DENY THE BIRTH
A CHILD, ASTORIA SAID, WAS THE PROPERTY OF ITS MOTHER, TO DO WITH AS SHE SEES FIT...
ONLY ITS MOTHER COULD DECIDE WHETHER A CHILD *SHOULD LIVE*
OR *DIE.*
IT WAS THEN THAT CIRIN REALIZED THE *EXTENT* OF THE DILEMMA SHE FACED.
SEVERAL INQUIRY BOARD MEMBERS URGED EXECUTION ...BUT ON WHAT *CHARGE* BECAME THE QUESTION...
IF CIRIN GAVE THE ORDER AND IT HAD BEEN A LIVE BIRTH, SHE WOULD BE GUILTY OF A NEARLY *UNIMAGINEABLE* HERESY ...
THE KILLING OF A *MOTHER*
EVEN A STILL BIRTH WOULD ONLY MEAN ASTORIA WASN'T YET A CITIZEN...

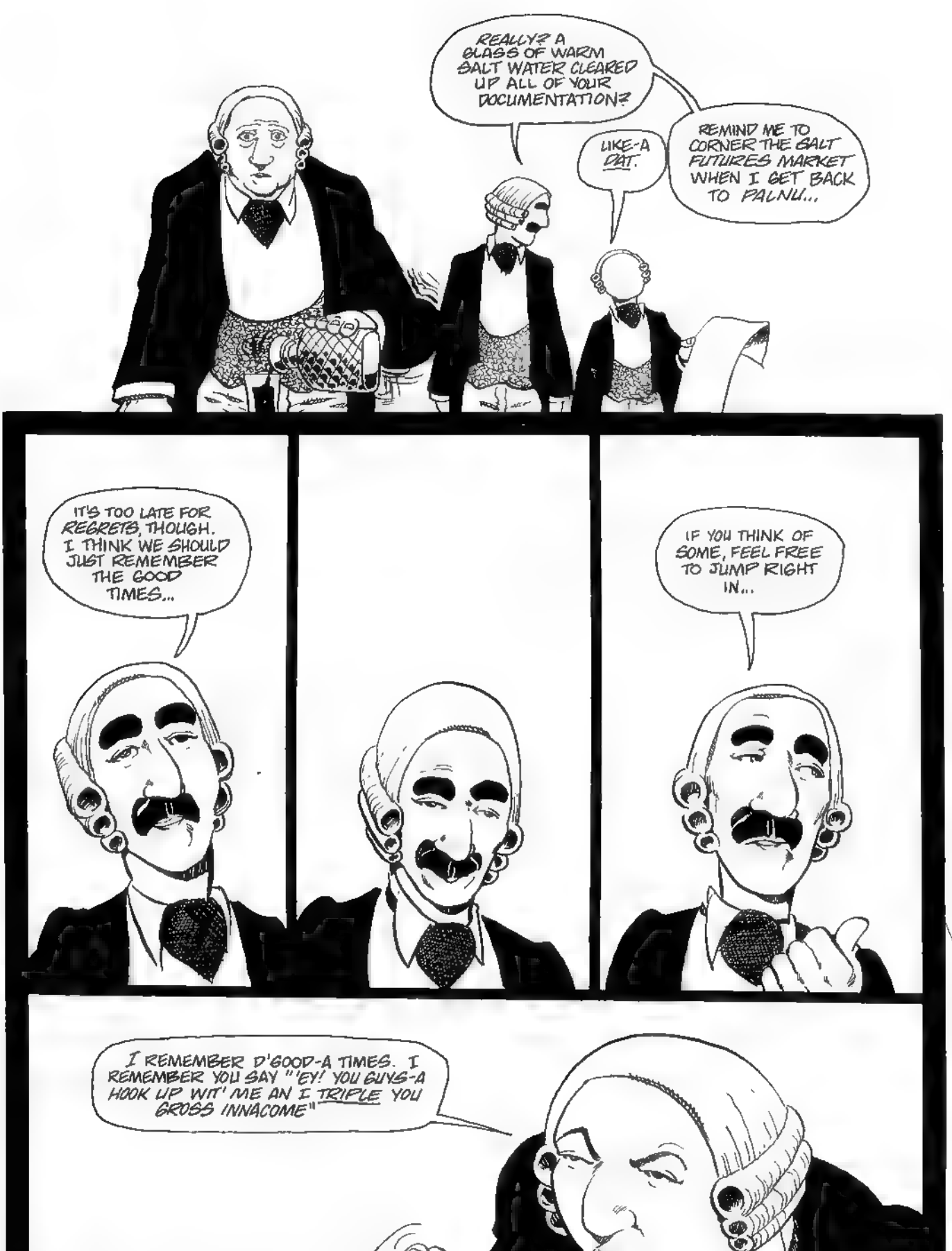
THE KEY WAS THE VIEWPOINT SHE HAD EXPRESSED THAT THE COUNCIL HAD NO BUSINESS IN THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN A MOTHER AND CHILD ...
CIRIN GOT THE COUNCIL TO AGREE THAT SO LONG AS NO EVIDENCE EXISTED OF INFANTICIDE, ASTORIA COULD NOT BE EXECUTED...
AND GOT THEM TO AGREE, FURTHER, THAT SO LONG AS ASTORIA DID NOT ADVOCATE THE MURDER OF CHILDREN AS BEING OUTSIDE THE MANDATE OF CIRIN'S GOVERNMENT, BUT ONLY OFFERED IT AS A MATTER FOR SOME SPECULATION THAT NO CHARGE OF SEDITION BE BROUGHT AGAINST HER...
THE PROCESS WAS A GOOD DEAL MORE ARDUOUS THAN THAT, OF COURSE. BUT THAT WAS THE COMPROMISE REACHED. CIRIN HAD ALIENATED MUCH OF HER CONSTITUENCY, BUT ASTORIA WAS NOW SAFE FROM PROSECUTION ...
UNTIL THE JUDGEMENT WAS READ--AND IT WAS ASTORIA WHO OBJECTED. SHE WAS ADVOCATING THE MURDER OF CHILDREN BY THEIR MOTHERS AS BEING OUTSIDE THE MANDATE OF CIRIN'S GOVERNMENT--OR ANY GOVERNMENT...

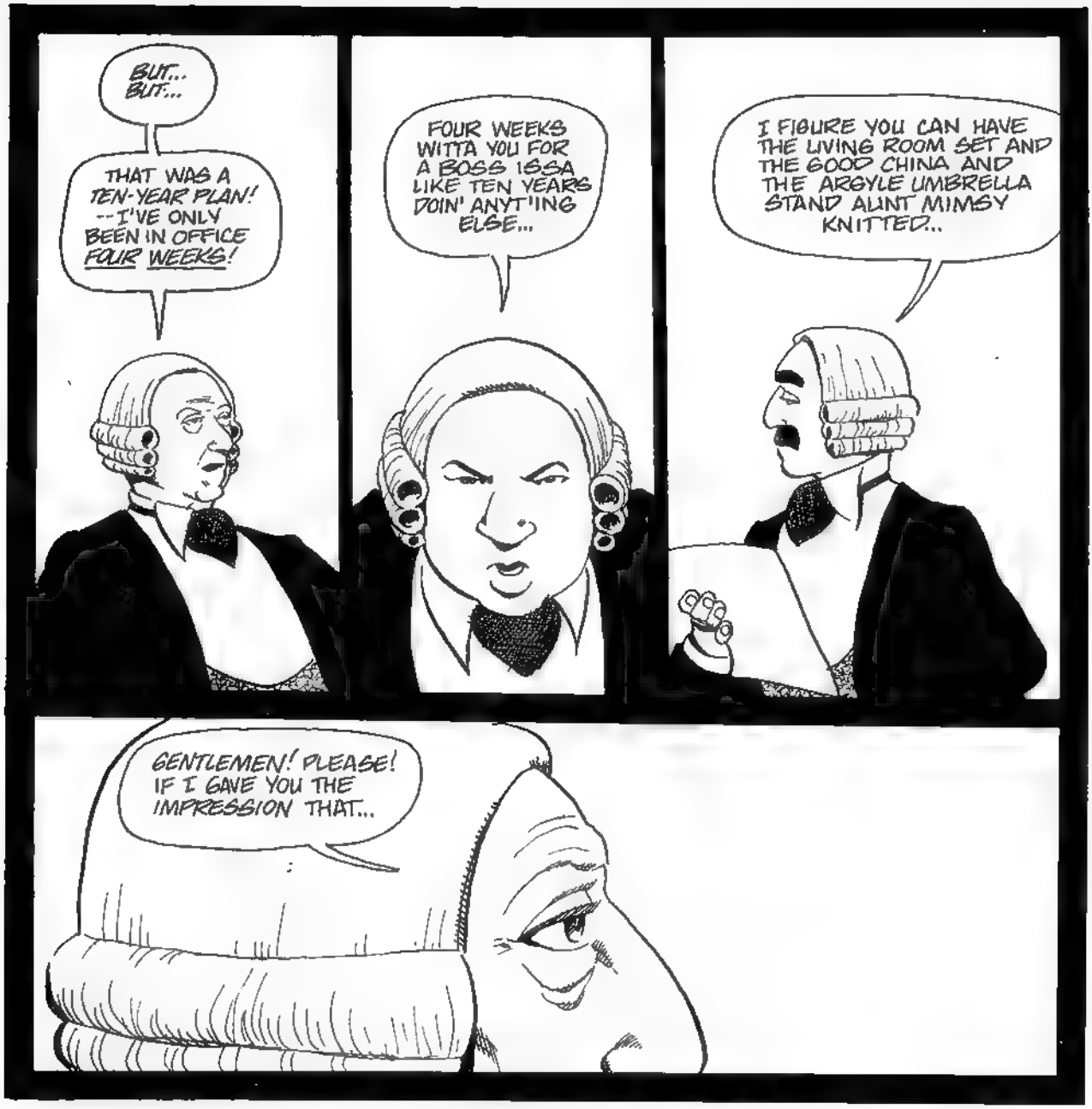
IT WAS A PERSONAL CONVICTION, SHE SAID. HER BELIEFS WERE SUCH THAT SHE FELT EACH INDIVIDUAL SHOULD ADVOCATE ALL OF THEIR OWN ATTITUDES RATHER THAN ADVOCATING THE BELIEFS OF THE SOCIETY OR GOVERNING STRUCTURE IN WHICH THEY FIND THEMSELVES
IT WAS THE SHEN DEVOTIONAL BELIEFS -- THE 'KEVIL'. TYPICALLY, ASTORIA HAD TAKEN A SYSTEM OF MEDITATION AND MADE IT INTO A POLITICAL MOVEMENT. THE NEXT MORNING...
MR. PRESIDENT -- STATE LEADERS JULIUS AND LEONARDI ARE HERE
GOODNESS -- I'VE TAKEN UP SO MUCH OF YOUR TIME WITH MY BABBLING ONCE AGAIN...
NO -- PLEASE GO ON
"THE NEXT MORNING..."

SO! WE FIND YOU AT LAST! SKULKING IN THE LAP OF LUXURY...
WHICH, I GRANT YOU, ISN'T SUCH A BAD PLACE FOR A GOOD SKULK ...
WE GOT-A BONE-A TO PICK...
INNA FACT WE GOT-A WHOLE-A SKELETON
SINCE YOU'VE TAKEN OVER, THE PALNAN CROWN HAS LOST A QUARTER OF ITS VALUE, LAND PRICES HAVE PLUMMETED AND WE HAVEN'T HAD ONE DAY WHEN IT WAS SUNNY ENOUGH TO PACK A PICNIC LUNCH AND GO TO THE BEACH ...
GENTLEMEN! PLEASE!
HOKAY-- HE'S A-BEGGING NOW! TIME-A TO HIT HIM WITTA-D'OLD ONESEY-TWOSEY PUNCH ...
YOU INNA SOME-A KINDA TROUBLE NOW, BIG-A SHOT

I'M LEAVING YOU --LEAVING-- DO YOU HEAR ME?
AND I'M TAKING THE CHILDREN WITH ME...
IT'S NO LIFE FOR THEM-- ALL THIS ARGUING OVER EQUALIZATION PAYMENTS, STATE RIGHTS, FEDERAL SUBSIDIES ...
LITTLE LEONARDI WAKES UP CRYING EVERY NIGHT-- I FEEL LIKE A SINGLE PARENT ...
ATSA FUNNY-- THIS MORNING YOU SAID YOU FELT-A LIKE A CHEESE SANDWICH ...
I SAY "I FEEL LIKE A SINGLE PARENT" ...
HOKAY I'M-A SHUT OP ..
YOU CAN'T BE SERIOUS --I'VE GIVEN YOU SECURITY--A STRONG ALLIANCE--INCREASED TRADE WITHIN THE CONFEDERATION...

IT'S NO USE. MY MIND'S MADE UP...
BUT...
MY MIND SHE'S A-MADE OP, TOO...
BUT WHAT EXACTLY ARE YOUR COMPLAINTS?
EVERY DAY I'M A GO INTO WORK ONE-A YOUR BOYS HE'S A SAY...
"EY! LEONARDI! WADDA YOU DO WITTA LASTA YEAR'S CUSTOMS ANNA EXCISE INNACOME?"
AN' I SAY-- "EY! ATSA LASTA YEAR'S MONEY --I GOTTA 'NOUGHA TROUBLE FINDIN' DISSA YEAR'S MONEY..."
BUT, SURELY, YOU HAVE RECEIPTS-- DOCUMENTATION ...
I HADDA DOCUMENTATION ONCE, BUT I DRINK A BIG-A GLASS OF WARM-A SALTY WATER ANNA IT WENT AWAY LIKE-A DAT...

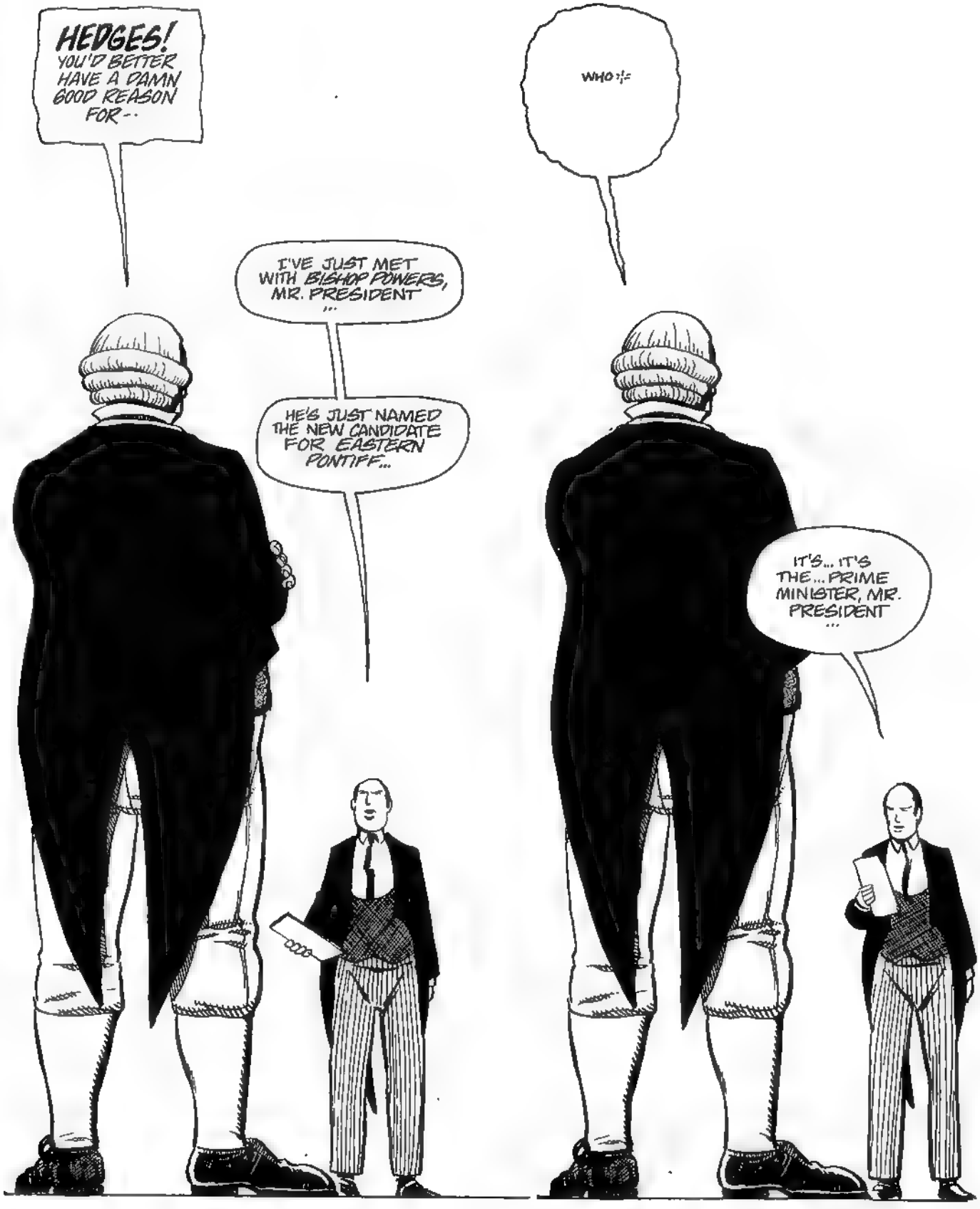

REALLY? A GLASS OF WARM SALT WATER CLEARED UP ALL OF YOUR DOCUMENTATION?
LIKE-A DAT.
REMIND ME TO CORNER THE SALT FUTURES MARKET WHEN I GET BACK TO PALNU...
IT'S TOO LATE FOR REGRETS, THOUGH. I THINK WE SHOULD JUST REMEMBER THE GOOD TIMES...
IF YOU THINK OF SOME, FEEL FREE TO JUMP RIGHT IN...
I REMEMBER D'GOOD-A TIMES. I REMEMBER YOU SAY "'EY! YOU GUYS-A HOOK UP WIT' ME AN I TRIPLE YOU GROSS INNACOME"


BUT... BUT...
THAT WAS A TEN-YEAR PLAN! --I'VE ONLY BEEN IN OFFICE FOUR WEEKS!
FOUR WEEKS WITTA YOU FOR A BOSS ISSA LIKE TEN YEARS DOIN' ANYT'ING ELSE...
I FIGURE YOU CAN HAVE THE LIVING ROOM SET AND THE GOOD CHINA AND THE ARGYLE UMBRELLA STAND AUNT MIMSY KNITTED..
GENTLEMEN! PLEASE! IF I GAVE YOU THE IMPRESSION THAT...
GOOD AFTERDAWN! I WILL BE SAYING TO EVERY EACH OF YOU ...
NAME WILL BE SCORZ OF SCORZ SCORZ AND SONS

I AM HERE FOR TO TALKING AT YOU "SEWAGE, SEWAGE, SEWAGE."
WELL, YOU'VE COME TO THE RIGHT PLACE
ALL OVER THE STATES OF THE COMING TOGETHER FELOWAR IS NOTHING BUT SEWAGE, SEWAGE, SEWAGE
WHO IS DIGSA GUY...?
I DON'T KNOW, BUT SO FAR HE HAGN'T SAID ANYTHING I'VE DISAGREED WITH ...
WHO LET THIS MAN IN HERE!?
HEDGES!
PLEASE TO I AM TALKING AT FAMOUS THE LORD PALNU AND FAMOUS THE ALSO DUKE, DUKE, DUKE OF LEONARDI... NO?

YOU BE MUCH NOW INTERESTED FOR 'AWAY THE SEWAGE', NO?
WHADDA SHOULD I SAY?
I DON'T KNOW, BUT I'D STAY AWAY FROM RUNNING WATER IF I WERE YOU
HEDGES!
WE SINCERE-TALK, NOW! SAY "SEWAGE FOR KEEPS"... YES? NO?
THIS IS BOTH FOR YOU... BOTH SAY "SCORZ SEWAGE AWAY IS ONLY WAY!" YES? YES??
WHADDA WE DO?
I'M TEMPTED TO TAKE HIM UP ON IT JUST TO FIND OUT WHAT HE'S TALKING ABOUT "!

YES! YES! YES! PERCENT SMELL OF FIFTY FOR REALLY AND ALSO TRUE
GUARANTEED SMELL!!
'EY!
ON THE OTHER HAND, YOU CAN NEVER BE TOO CAREFUL ABOUT THESE THINGS...
HEDGES!
MAKE FOR YOU OFFER "TOO EASY TO INSTALL... SMELL" AMAZING IS THE SMELL'
WE TAKE A YOU WORD-A FOR IT,..
YOU DON'T SUPPOSE HE CARRIES A SAMPLE CASE DO YOU?
OF ALL THE--
HEDGES!
I DON'T LIKE THE SOUND OF THIS!


HEDGES! YOU'D BETTER HAVE A DAMN GOOD REASON FOR--
I'VE JUST MET WITH BISHOP POWERS, MR. PRESIDENT ...
HE'S JUST NAMED THE NEW CANDIDATE FOR EASTERN PONTIFF...
WHO?!
IT'S... IT'S THE... PRIME MINISTER, MR. PRESIDENT ...

HE'S NOMINATED CEREBUS...
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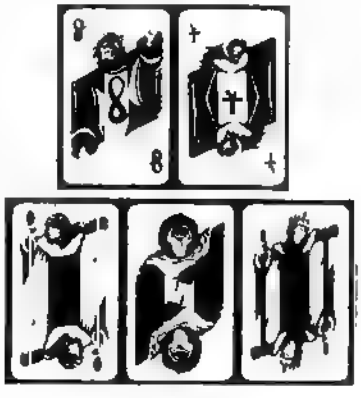

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STRANGE PEOPLE FLOATING OVER CITY! WHERE DO THEY COME FROM?... WHAT DO THEY WANT?...

ALSO. . 8 BALL --- THE VENEMOUS CRIMINAL AND PUBLIC ENEMY --- HAS ESCAPED A POLICE DRAGNET ONLY TO BE CAPTURED BY

A STRANGE WITCH AND THE FLOATING MEN AT A DESERTED GARBAGE DUMP IN THE LOST WILDERNESS OUTSIDE OF TOWN!

CONT' FROM LAST ISSUE!

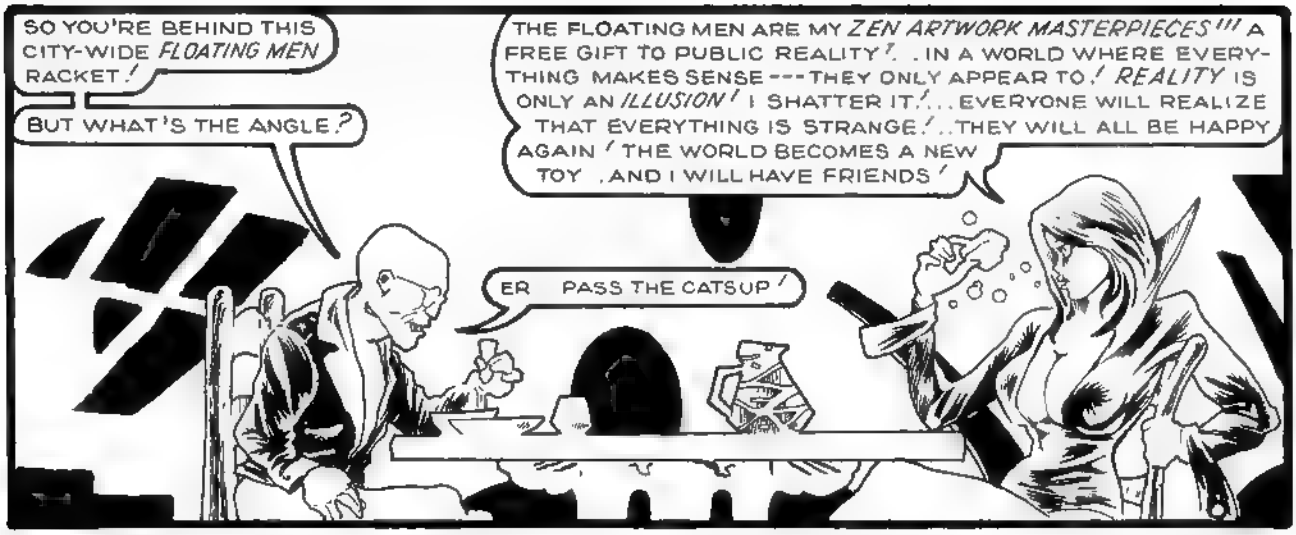
HE, HE, HE.. DANCE... DANCE ... DANCE, THE GARBAGE!!!

ART & STORY – BOB BURDEN
LETTERING – ROXANNE STARR
PRODUCED AT THE
BOMBERTOWN DADA-WERKES STUDIO
ALL CONTENTS © ROBERT BURDEN 1984

I WOULD SPIT MY TEETH!
TOLL ROAD NO!
OUT WITH THE ROT!
DOWN WITH THE STINK!

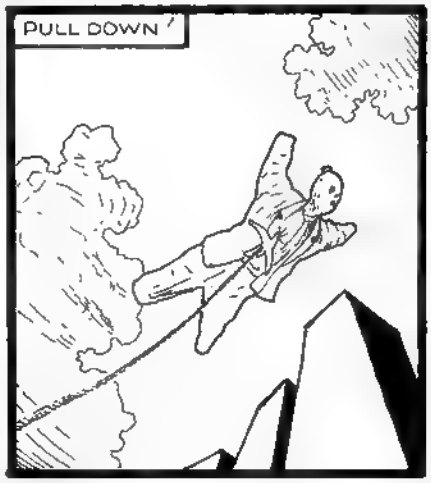
LONG SONGS WILL MAKE NO SENSE!
TREES WILL GROW WHERE YOU HAVE DIED!!
.. AND ALL OF YOU ARE STUPID!!!

WELCOME, STRANGER!. WE'RE HAVING SOAP AND SANDWICHES FOR LUNCH!
YOU MEAN *SOUP*!?
NO! *SOAP*! HERE THIS MAGIC RING WILL MAKE THE SOAP TASTE GOOD!


SO YOU'RE BEHIND THIS CITY-WIDE *FLOATING MEN* RACKET!
BUT WHAT'S THE ANGLE?
THE FLOATING MEN ARE MY *ZEN ARTWORK MASTERPIECES!!!* A FREE GIFT TO PUBLIC REALITY!. . IN A WORLD WHERE EVERYTHING MAKES SENSE---THEY ONLY APPEAR TO! *REALITY* IS ONLY AN *ILLUSION!* I SHATTER IT!... EVERYONE WILL REALIZE THAT EVERYTHING IS STRANGE!..THEY WILL ALL BE HAPPY AGAIN! THE WORLD BECOMES A NEW TOY . AND I WILL HAVE FRIENDS!
ER PASS THE CATSUP!

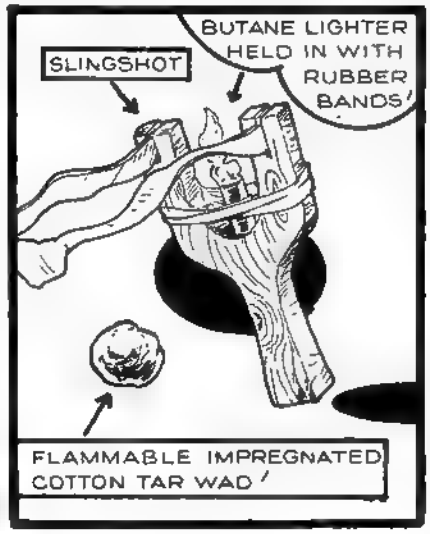
MEANWHILE IN TOWN---THE FLAMING CARROT HAS ORGANIZED CIVIL SEARCH AND DESTROY SQUADS!

GRAPPLING HOOK!


PULL DOWN!

MASSACRE!

INGENIOUS YOUTH ON BUILDING TOPS!


SLINGSHOT
BUTANE LIGHTER HELD IN WITH RUBBER BANDS!
FLAMMABLE IMPREGNATED COTTON TAR WAD!

AND---OF COURSE---ARMY SURPLUS' FLAMETHROWERS!!

THIS IS ROOFTOP DEFENSE SQUAD 2 OF THE JUNIOR FLAMING CARROT PATROL CALLING BRAVO LEADER!!! CITY CLEAR OF FLOATING MEN FROM PERSHING POINT TO SHERWOOD PLAZA AREA!
WAIT!
SUPRISE ATTACK SQUADRON!
TOO CLOSE FOR SLINGSHOTS!!
USE SWITCHBLADES AND BRASS KNUCKS!
SNIK
..MEANWHILE - A WOUNDED FLOATER RETURNS HOME!
AWRK! WHAT ARE THEY DOING IN TOWN?
USING 8 BALL'S HEAD AS A CRYSTAL BALL - SHE VIEWS THE DESTRUCTION!
GULP!
YOU'RE UNDER HOUSE ARREST!
GUARD HIM!!
OLD WITCH TO THE RESCUE!
I'M COMING MY CHILDREN!
THEY'RE KILLING MY BABIES!!
KILLING MY BABIES!
LOOK A WITCH!
GET HER TOO!

CRASH LANDING!
A FLYING WITCH!
GET HER!!! SHE MUST BE BEHIND THIS!
GET BACK!
--- WHIP OUT THE MAGIC WAND OF GREATEST FEARS!
POOF
SPIDERS!!! I CAN'T STAND SPIDERS!
POOF
SCRATCHING BLACKBOARD SOUND!
EEEE
POOF
UTILITY BILLS!
GARRRR
EMBARRASSMENT!
YIKES!
AND THEN THE WITCH ESCAPES
MEANWHILE
KEEP AN EYE ON THAT 8 BALL! HEH, HEH!
GREAT DISGUISE!
HOURS LATER CREWS ARE CLEANING THE BATTLE MESS! IN THE DEBRIS
AN AUTOGRAPHED PICTURE OF GENE RAYBURN!
HEH HEH! I KNEW HE'D PICK IT UP!
A NOTE ON THE OTHER SIDE!
WITH THIS YOU CAN FIND HER... SINCERELY YOURS
INSPECTOR KEENE GET YOUR FIVE BEST MEN TOGETHER!
MEET ME ON THE EDGE OF TOWN IN 15 MINUTES!

THE OLD WITCH IS PLOTTING HER REVENGE!... A GIANT GARAGE-DOOR OPENER THAT WILL OPERATE ALL GARAGE DOORS WITHIN 100 MILES AT HER COMMAND!!!
OH, LOOK!...IT'S TIME TO WATCH MR ED!
GOT TO GET IN RANGE...
SNAP
ER.. WHAT'S THAT?
TAKE THAT!... YOU BIG ORANGE RABBIT FOOD!
POOF
AND THAT!
POOF
GO MARINES!
IN RANGE NOW!
POOF
...AND THAT!!
DEPLOY!
... AND LAUNCH PROJECTILES!
SWARMING BARRAGE OF WATER BALOONS ..
AEEE!!! YOU KILL ME!
I'M SHRINKING!
I NEVER WANTED TO HURT YOU ..
I ONLY WANTED..
..TO HAVE SOME FUN!
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AARDVARK COMMENT

P.O. BOX 1674, STATION 'C', KITCHENER, ONTARIO N2G 4R2

Dear Dave:

Well, no wonda the characters on the cover of issue #60 are standing before a black background. It's a dead issue! Please come back to the land of the living Dave and give your readers the life and excitement we're used to seeing. Let this funeral you've created be over!

Libby Armstrong
Toronto, Canada

And just when this letter jump-started my "Toronto has never liked me" paranoia, Downsview comes through in a pinch. (Toronto never has liked me though. Really.)

★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★

Dear Dave,

Will Eisner's Spirit and Contract with God

Walt Kelly's Pogo

Carl Bark's Donald Duck, Uncle Scrooge, et al.

Dave Sim's Cerebus

Cerebus really belongs in that very short list of the best works in the comics field, and you're still working towards a creative peak. Instead of allowing yourself to wallow in the superhero morass, you have quietly been assembling a truly adult series.

When I started reading Cerebus I was still interested in adolescent power fantasies. The very early issues owe a small amount to Marvel's barbarian works in terms of their plot and structure. Since then the series has matured, coincidentally at the same time I was maturing. The X-Men fell by the wayside, but I still read Cerebus.

Those who think that the comic book as a form is limited to superficial, visually appealing subject matter need only look to your recent explorations of the relationships between people and politics. The world you have created is partly absurdist: Groucho Marx is a capitalist dictator, who uses people unscrupulously but remains loveable. When he does not appear he is a dark power lurking above the action. When he does appear, he's likeable and disarming. Lord Julius is probably the best example of the juxtaposition of low humour and complex issues which is the cornerstone of the series.

Issue 60 is also a good example of this: five monologues! A real dare comes off seamlessly. Characters reveal themselves through dialogue and body language. Many other comics reveal character self-consciously with extended thought balloons, self-analysis and sudden developments that come from left field. Characters in Cerebus present themselves to us naturally, the way we discover real people, through their words and actions.

Sophia gains real sympathy through her monologue. In issue 3 she was a caricature, the butt of granola jokes and Cerebus' wisecracks. She, like Bran MacMufin, Julius and many others in this series, has evolved from a parody character to one having more dimension than the original. Her attempt to reach out to Cerebus and make the most of their arranged relationship is touching, particularly when she admits that "I am a stupid northern peasant girl".

Theresa, coolly describing how she profited from an illicit relationship, is her opposite number. It is fitting that she is faceless on the bottom of page 19. These panels show your talent for body language - you convey her mood without facial features.

Astoria reveals concern for her cause and shakeability where previously she seemed as cool and manipulative as Theresa. Page 10, panel 3 is a touching portrait of her, showing vulnerability in contrast to the ice we knew during High Society (what is this section of the saga called?).

The Elf and Henrot-Gutch stories both provide comic relief skillfully, the punchlines are as much in the expressions of Blakely in the last panel of the latter story and the Elf's in her story as in the dialogue.

The silent parties to the monologues are just as important as the speaking characters. Your photocopying of the splendid Weisshaupt portrait on page 16 works perfectly, he is not showing boredom but absolute stillness, one can tell that he is listening to every word, waiting for a speck of opportunity to pounce on. Weisshaupt, who seemed before to be a third rate Julius, now seems formidable and threatening.

This page relates us back to the earth-pig himself on page two, also still, but lost in loathing for the situation he is in. It is obvious that he is listening with one ear open, as one does to a nagging. Cerebus knows his position, he's been there before. The question is whether he will have the resources to escape it this time. I'm waiting for you to answer that one. And for more surprises, more risk-taking, and more maturity. Thank you for Cerebus.

Robin D. Laws
424 Stong Res, York University
4700 Keele,
Downsview, Ontario
M3T 1P3

Maybe only universities like me in Toronto. Or maybe only suburbanites. Maybe only people named Robin.

★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★

Dave:

CEREBUS is becoming very dull. Please do away with all this political crap and bring back the barbarian stories. You know, hack, hack (Punchline) punch, slug, etc..etc. I get a bigger thrill from those stories then the recent ones you've been producing, and they're much clearer in plot. And while you're at it, bring back the Moon Roach (not the Wolveroach).

PS. I love Henrot-Gutch!!

Anthony Padilla
3701 Oakgreen Ave. N.,
Stillwater, MN., 55082

....and then we have Minnesota.

★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★

Dear Dave & Deni.

Instead of commenting on the story (or, I should say stories) in CEREBUS #61, I would like to move directly to your letters page and one letter in particular, from Marvel's legal firm of Kenyon and Kenyon.

Not only was I merely shocked and disappointed by that pile of legalese mumbo-jumbo, but I was also rather ticked off (as I'm sure you were too). Actually, some of their comments were almost amusing, e.g. "the unauthorized use of a character whose name and appearance to Marvel's 'Wolverine' character...is likely to cause irreparable injury and damage to Marvel." *What* "injury and damage," I ask you? I'm sure you are wondering about this yourself.

I guess the folks at Marvel and Kenyon & Kenyon do not know the meaning of the terms "parody" and "satire", not to mention "sense of humor" (or even Monty Python's classic "nudge nudge, wink wink"). That insipid letter by Mr. Stuart J. Snider (oops...I hope I'm not heading for a libel suit here...those Americans will sue anybody) was all the

THE GEORGE PEREZ INTERVIEW!

IN THE 50th ISSUE OF

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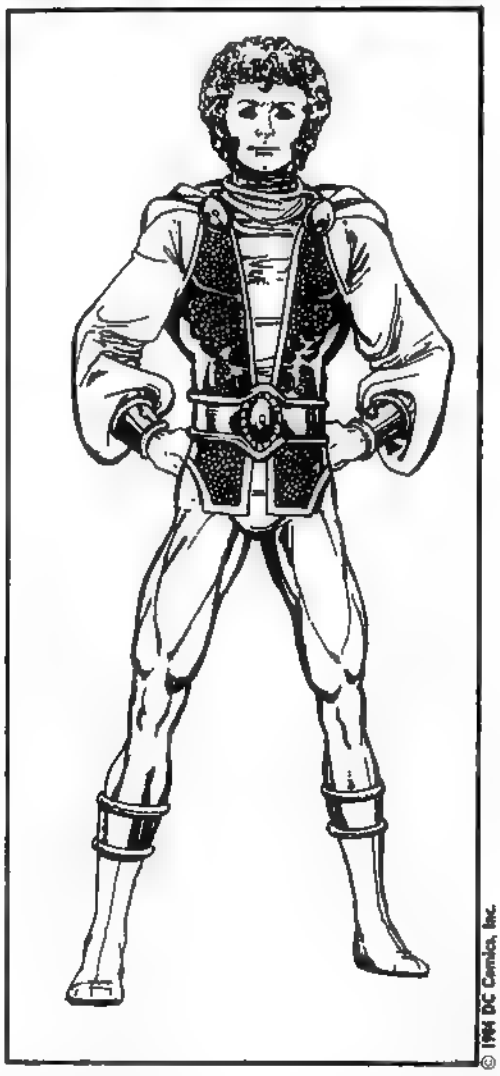

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Join Denny O'Neil and Mike W. Barr as they discuss the most perfect super-hero created for comics: THE BATMAN! The article is generously illustrated with the art of Neal Adams, who drew many of the O'Neil Batman stories.

Issue #50 also looks at statistics taken from *The Official Handbook of the Marvel Universe*. Find out how Marvel Earth compares with "real" Earth as comics critic Heidi MacDonald takes a humorous and insightful look at what life is like for the world's favorite super-heroes.

JEMM, SON OF SATURN, the new DC mini-series by Greg Potter, Gene Colan, and Klaus Janson is previewed in this issue as well

AMAZING HEROES #50 doesn't stop there. It also gives you more of what you buy the magazine for: another episode of *Star Hawks*, *Star Wars*, a bigger reviews section, a bigger letters section, a very special trivia quiz, as well as up-to-date news and the coming comics checklist.

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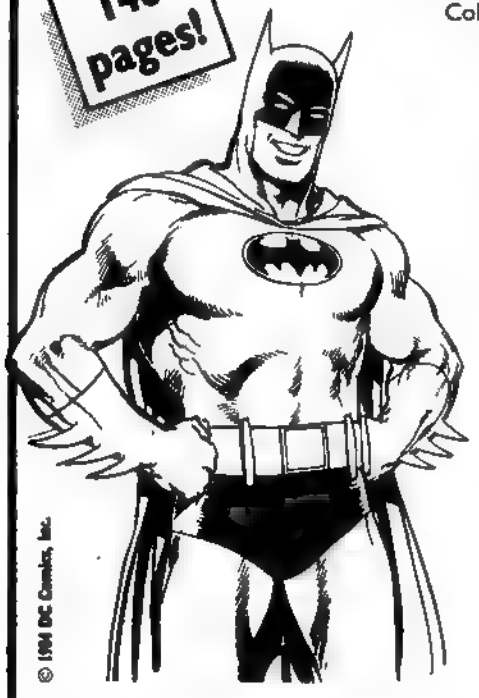

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more ironic when you consider the appearance of Cerebus himself in the pages of a recent Marvel comic (MARVEL FANFARE #15).

I'm no lawyer, so I don't know what else to tell you. I, for one, would like to see Wolveroach appear in CEREBUS again, and I really hope they haven't scared you off. In fact, a court case just might be a good idea as Marvel would have to show how it has suffered "irreparable injury and damage" from the appearance of your Wolveroach character. As they say, truth is stranger than fiction. In any case, we're behind you 100%, Dave and Deni...at least, I am!

Conrad P. Felber
1319 Rose Marie Avenue,
Sudbury, Ontario
P3A 4E4

I think what Marvel was objecting to was the use of a Wolverine parody on three consecutive covers. I agree, however, that it would be very difficult for them to prove "irreparable injury and damage".

* * * * * * * * * * *

Dear Mr. Sim,

Having decided that it was about time that I tapped out a letter to Aardvark Comment, I decided to check out previous ACs to see what type of letter belongs there. Let's see now, there is:

a) The pseudo-intellectual literary assassination attempt that was probably engraved on a meat cleaver which was then used in an attempt to re-arrange Dave Sim's part. Such missives seems to be written as journeyman pieces for those hoping to get columns in Comics Journal. I do not number myself among that body, so how about:

b) The deliberately obscure and obtuse letter that has the sole merit of usually gaining single phrases comment from Dave Sim and therefore creates more space for:

c) The silly fan club letter, which I haven't joined yet, so there is always:

d) The numbered questions list. I do not have that many queries, so I might consider:

e) The "Gee, you are Shakespeare and Leonardo Da Vinci combined." type of epistle. That will not do because being British I hate to be gushing, and in any case you do not resemble either of those two august persons. Perhaps I could try:

f) The extremely stupid and provocative letter that frequently gains their scribes membership of the elect who saunter around conventions flaunting their "Yeah, I got insulted in print by Dave Sim too." badges.

Perhaps I'll just go away and think about it some more.

John E. Taylor
9, Archfield Road,
Cotham, Bristol
BS6 6BD England U.K.

(b)

* * * * * * * * * * *

A letter to D and D Sim:

Anyways, I would say that this Sophia chick is really together. (#60 pp15). She's also got guts. Anyone who can handle Henrot-Gutch for any amount of time is alright by my book. Also, despite all the criticism I personally think that the black print on the borders of #57 looked great...on my hands, on my face, on my mother's good white hand towels...Unfortunately, mummy dearest doesn't agree. So, if anyone out there happens to find any extra hand towels hanging around the home or work place, all contributions would be more than welcome and greatly appreciated.

Getting back to the heart of the matter, I have some serious questions that need some serious answers:

1 Who?
2 What?
3 When?
4 Where
5 How?
6 Why?
7 How much is postage to Ontario?

Anxiously awaiting your reply.

Deb Ahrons
15 Barrett Road,
Lexington, MA., 02173

1 You and me.
2 YOU AND ME!
3 A week from Thursday.
4 Mr. Cairo's
5 Limousine, plane, limousine.
6 Guess.
7 Depends how much you weigh.

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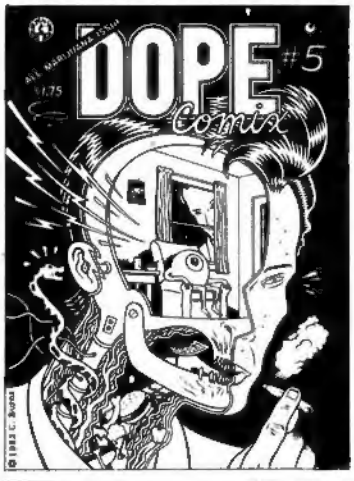

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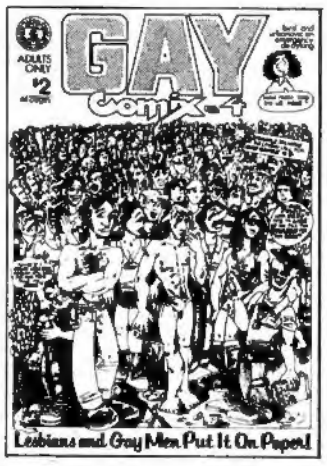

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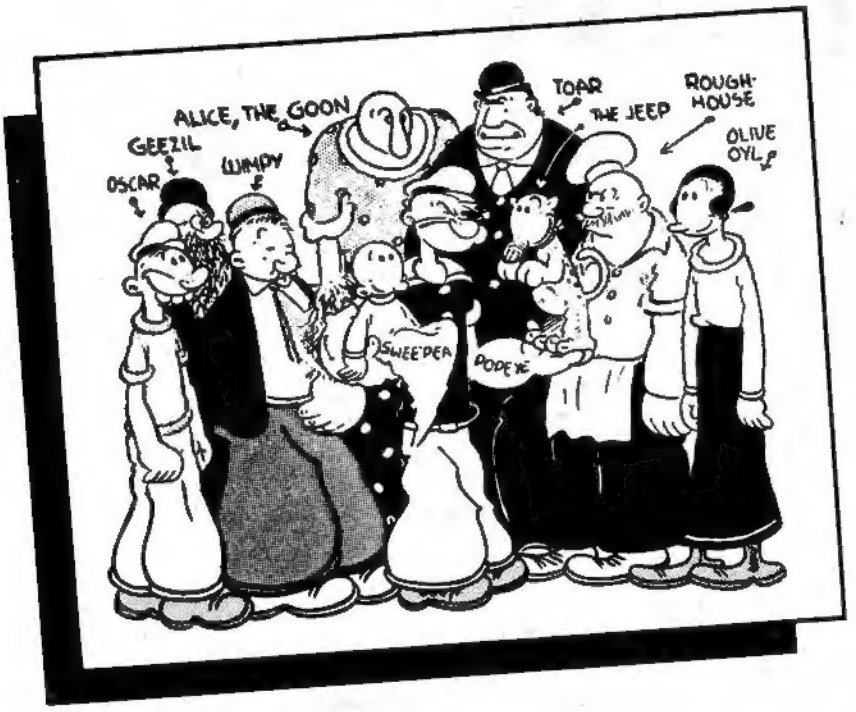

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Arn Saba and I balance EXIT signs on our heads as we prepare to do just that at the Aardvark-Vanaheim panel. Deni seems to have settled in for the day and Bill Messner-Loebs prepares to wow the fans with his George Raft impression.

Gerhard and I share a quiet moment in the lobby of the Oakland Hyatt. He got quite an ovation at the party Saturday night until they realized it was Ger-hard and not Gary Hart.

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